

STALL CANOPY, &c., FROM ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, MAYENCE.

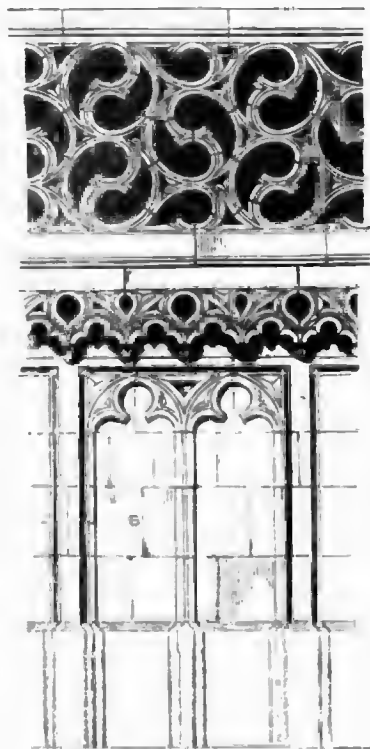


FIG. 3.



STALL CANOPY, &c., FROM ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, MAYENCE.

THE church of St. Stephen is chiefly a work of the latter part of the fourteenth century, but has many indications of having been preceded by a Romanesque structure. It consists of an apsidal chancel, nave of three bays with aisles, west tower, square below and octagon above, and the nave is continued west of the tower a space about equal to one bay. A small quadrangular cloister attached to the south side of the church leads to the remains of the conventual buildings. The whole contains much good and interesting work, but except the church itself is much neglected, and fast going to ruin. The destruction in the first instance is attributed to the French, who, when the city was occupied by Napoleon's forces, used these buildings as a magazine and barrack.

The engraving represents portions of the stone canopy to the stalls in the chancel. The arrangement and design is similar on both the north and south sides, and extends to a length of ten of the front panels, fig. 3, equal to five of the back panels with their intervening arches, fig. 1. The gallery shown by the section, fig. 2, appears to be for the convenience of arranging tapestry or ornaments at festivals. It can only be gained by means of a ladder over one of the parapets. The open tracery of the parapets is arranged without regard to the spaces of the panels below. The seats are of oak, but are very inferior in character to the tracery, and have therefore been omitted in the drawing. A curious point about them (to be found in the cathedral of the city and in other German churches) is a provision, no doubt convenient enough to the tobacco smokers, but somewhat offensive to the refined delicacy of English perceptions.

REFERENCES.

- Fig. 1.—One panel of side towards aisle.
Fig. 2.—Transverse section.
Fig. 3.—One panel at back of stalls: chancel side.
Fig. 4.—Plan of mouldings at A, fig. 1.
Fig. 5.—Section of tracery in parapet, fig. 1.
Fig. 6.—Plan of mouldings at B, fig. 3.
Fig. 7.—Section of tracery in parapet, fig. 3.
Fig. 8.—Section of tracery to canopy.
Figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8 are shown quarter full size.

FINE ART CRITICISM.*

ERRONEOUS criticism is not always the result of ignorance or incapacity; it is too often the expression of ill-nature, a disingenuous spirit, and unacid judgment,—a want of charity and humility, on the part of men from whom better things might have been expected; who look down, or affect to do so, on works, to which they should look up and learn. Faults are dwelt upon, and qualities that would more than redeem them are passed over in silence. A work is too often despatched with a disparaging remark, or allusion to some trifling fault of execution, and all its beauties of execution, and, perhaps, grandeur of conception, and truth of expression, its *circa vis animi*, are overlooked.

Akin to these is an order of architectural critics, who, from perhaps a keen sense of the ridiculous, and a wish on all occasions to say something smart, affect to see in all works of architecture a resemblance to something of ordinary or vulgar use. Many a beautiful composition has been sneered at in this mood. A friend of mine, for whose general opinion on points of art or literature I have much respect, complained to me the other day that he can never look down South Castle-street, Liverpool, with-

out having the idea of a hemispherical wire mouse-trap presented to his imagination through the medium of the Custom-house dome,—the wires being represented by the lines of its covering. The comparison of a domed heltry with a pepper-box has become trite. Now, though this ridicule is not always groundless, yet the principle is unsound. A mouse-trap or pepper-box, or equally mean article may be shaped by its makers into an exact model of some really artistic structure; but would the latter be rendered less artistic? If it would, no "thing of beauty" is safe; and the Greek lyre will for ever resemble a door-scraper, of which it has too often been made the type. This style of criticism, however, I had no idea of noticing till I found it adopted by writers whose respectability might give it effect. In a paper on architecture in "Chambers's Information for the People" I find the following remarks: "Architects require to guard against introducing forms which will revive recollections of unpleasing or mean objects. Fine buildings have been rendered ridiculous by inattention to this point. One structure is defaced by a dome the exact model of an inverted punch-bowl; the pinnacles of another resemble the upturned legs of a footstool; the front of a third is like a grenadier's cap; and the corners of a fourth are defaced by turrets the shape of pepper-casters. The most distant resemblance to all familiar objects ought to be carefully shunned." Now, this is impossible, or at least, if done, all beautiful form might in time be excluded from art; and critics would be better employed exhorting manufacturers not to make articles of mean use like fine buildings, pepper-casters like turrets, or stool-legs like pinnacles. Though the parody does not dishonour the poem, yet such things, generally speaking, should not be done. A man must have but small veneration for "Apollo

* See p. 766, ante.